

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 25th September 2019 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk

ABSENT: Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Christine Ford

C/6353 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were several members of the public present for the Allotment Competition presentation of prizes.

There were approximately 20 members of public present for the debate on the climate emergency motion.

A resident of Highfield Road, sought the Council's support to assist with improving internet speeds in parts of Ringwood where the infrastructure still relied on copper cables, which delivered very slow speeds. He explained that, although he has a fibre contract for speeds of up to 54Mb, the service providers only guarantee 12Mb and he generally only receives 3 or 4Mb.

He explained that the infrastructure could be provided, but as there were no current plans to upgrade, this would have to be funded by affected individuals and businesses. A government grant was available to homeowners (£500) and businesses (£2500). He asked whether the Town Council would take on a coordinating role; raising awareness locally; communicating with BT; and collecting details of interested parties to forward on to the infrastructure provider.

Cllr Heron reported that New Forest District Council was aware of and working on this issue, and said that a councillor in Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish had successfully achieved fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband in the area, so there were a number of people who might be able to help. He offered to contact the resident to assist.

A resident informed Members of Refill, a campaign designed to help reduce plastic pollution by making it easy to refill reusable water bottles, instead of buying plastic ones. She would like to see this promoted in Ringwood and asked the Town Council to support and promote the campaign. She would also like to see awareness raised in schools and more use made of



water fountains. She had spoken to Refill New Forest and they had advised the best way to promote the scheme was through social media and by offering to sign up on behalf of local businesses. She was invited to provide contact details to the office to enable further discussion.

**C/6354
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Edge and Cllr Ford.

**C/6355
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none declared at this time.

**C/6356
ALLOTMENT COMPETITION 2019**

The Town Mayor thanked Ringwood Garden Club for carrying out the judging of the annual Allotment Competition and congratulated all plot holders on their achievements.

Mr Atack, Chairman of the judging panel, explained that common criteria were used to judge the plots and between 25% and 40% of plots were eliminated on the third criterion. Having said that, the good plots were good and the best were exceptional. It had been noted that the best plots had influenced adjoining plots as these had also achieved good scores. The overall winner couldn't be faulted and had achieved 100%. He congratulated all the winners.

Cllr Andy Briers, Chairman of Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, announced the winners and presented prizes as follows:

Upper Kingston
1st Mr & Mrs Shields Plot UK10
2nd Michael Skeath Plot UK22a

Southampton Road
1st Anne Taylor Plot SR9
2nd Colin Joy Plot SR8

Hightown Road
1st Peter Malloy Plot HR17
2nd Mr M Gubbins Plot HR18

Mini Plots
1st Josephine Burkin Plot HRM12
2nd Josephine Burkin Plot HRM13

Overall Winner
Mr and Mrs Shields Plot UK10

C/6357

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

C/6336 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a correction was required with regards to the crime statistics reported at the meeting on 31st July 2019. The second sentence should read: “In the last **quarter**, there had been 573 reported crimes in Ringwood and Fordingbridge, an increase of 38 from the **same quarter the** previous year.”

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 31st July, with the above amendment having been agreed, and 11th September 2019, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/6358

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 4th September 2019.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 4th September 2019 be received.

C/6359

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 2nd August and 6th September 2019.

P/5635 – Cllr Day reported that the working party meeting to consider the town centre improvements funded by Highways England Designation Fund had been arranged for 9am on Monday 30th September.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd August and 6th September 2019 be received.

C/6360

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 18th September 2019.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 18th September 2019 be received.

C/6361

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Members watched a presentation prepared by Cllr Deboos in support of his and Cllr O'Reilly's motion, as follows:

“That Ringwood Town Council declare a climate emergency in accord with Hampshire County Council and in consequence that:

1. A declaration of a climate emergency is made;

2. The Council will work with Hampshire County Council and the New Forest District Council with the aim of achieving “carbon neutrality” by 2030;
3. Going forward, consideration of “carbon impact” will be core to the decision making of the Council;
4. The Council will set up a working party to determine what expertise is available in-house and within the Ringwood community to assist with achieving the “carbon neutrality” goal;
5. The Council will provide local leadership to the Ringwood community regarding climate change.

Prior to the start of the debate, the Town Clerk advised that many town and parish councils across the country are preparing to consider this issue and there is a wealth of information and resources available on formulating policies; the type of actions local councils can take; and how in practice councils can work with other organisations.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine, who chairs a District Council task and finish group on this issue, cautioned about declaring a climate emergency and committing to something that might not be achievable, particularly if the starting point is not known, and also questioned how effective the Council could be in what is a global problem. He explained that the District Council was looking at what the authority could do, in areas where it has control to improve the environment of the local community. It had already reduced its carbon footprint by half since 2010 by introducing, for example, solar panels, energy efficient lighting, working from home and hot desking, and was now looking to convert its vehicle fleet to electric. He recommended producing an environment action plan in conjunction with partners.

Cllr Heron also had concerns about declaring a climate emergency. However, he said that everyone should do their bit to look after where we live and agreed that the Council should look to do what it could to reduce its impact on the environment.

Cllr Day acknowledged there was a global climate emergency and supported the motion in principle. However he did not agree with the wording of the motion and felt that the Council could be held to account for something that might not be achievable. Rather than try to achieve carbon neutrality, he suggested the aim should be to reduce environmental impact in the wider sense with a detailed plan of how this could be achieved.

Cllr Deboos agreed that a plan of action was required, but this could not be produced without having a starting point. He said there was a need to recognise the issues and seek to mitigate them. As someone with 40 years scientific experience, he was prepared to work on this one day a week on a pro-bono basis. He felt it was important to reach out to the local community to see what help and expertise they could offer, but also to show them that the Council is taking the issue seriously.

Cllr Haywood stated the Council would not be alone in declaring a climate emergency as councils across the country had already taken this step. He was sympathetic to the need for the motion to be more precisely worded to achieve the desired outcome, but said there was a need to ensure that the thrust and the sentiment of the motion was not watered down or lost.

Cllr Turner said that residents were looking for leadership from the Council, and added that climate emergency was now common parlance.

Cllr Kelleher reminded everyone why the issue was so important, outlining facts about global warming, sea levels rising and the impact on people and animals.

Cllr Day proposed amendments to the motion, seconded by Cllr Heron, as follows:



“In the light of climate change and other environmental issues, such as use of plastics, Ringwood Town Council resolves to set up a working party reporting to the Planning, Town & Environment Committee, to examine the Council’s carbon footprint and to make recommendations as to what steps might be taken to mitigate the environmental impact of its activities, and provide leadership to the local community.”

However, the Town Clerk advised that this could not be considered as an amendment as it negated the original motion.

All Members agreed that something needed to be done, but the wording of the motion was not acceptable to all. If Members voted and the motion fell, it would not be possible to consider this issue again for a period of six months. Cllrs Deboos and O’Reilly therefore agreed to withdraw the motion, on the understanding that Members would work over the next month on amending the motion to one that was acceptable to all and include an item on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting to consider the revised motion.

RESOLVED: That the motion be withdrawn and a revised motion be considered at the next Full Council meeting on 30th October 2019.

**C/6362
TOWN CLERK’S ANNUAL REVIEW**

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report and the recommendations therein (*Annex A*).

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Staffing Committee be amended by the addition of “To undertake an annual review of the Town Clerk’s performance in such manner as it sees fit and make recommendations to the Policy & Finance Committee with regard to the Town Clerk’s pay.”

ACTION Chris Wilkins

**C/6363
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

The Town Mayor reported the following:

- 1) He had attended a meeting of Ringwood Community Network and continued to support the group’s aims.
- 2) At the Clean Up Ringwood litter pick on 8th September an amount of drug related evidence had been found. He had raised this issue with the Police.
- 3) The Twinning Association had held a successful fund raising event on 13th September and it was hoped that a reciprocal visit to Pont Audemer could now be organised.
- 4) He had met with representatives of Rotary Club of Ringwood and the Town Clerk to discuss funding of the proposed new hedge in Mansfield Road.
- 5) He had attended Carnival, which had been an immense success.
- 6) He would be meeting an officer from New Forest District Council to discuss the provision of replacement bins in the town centre.

**C/6364
REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Day offered congratulations and thanks to the organisers of the Carnival for their magnificent efforts.



Cllr Frederick had been contacted by a resident concerned about the volume and speed of traffic using Parsonage Barn Lane and had passed this information on to the District Council Ward Members.

C/6365
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Heron reported that Cabinet on 2nd October would be considering an Electoral Review, which proposed reducing the number of District Councillors from 60 to 48. The District Council was investigating a drainage issue in Blynkbonnie Car Park, which had caused some flooding. He had taken up the issue of antisocial behaviour on the junction of Bickerley Road with Kingsbury Lane with the Police.

Members received a written report from County Councillor Thierry (*Annex B*).

C/6366
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 2 nd October 2019
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 4 th October 2019
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 16 th October 2019
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 30 th October 2019

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.58pm.

APPROVED
30th October 2019

TOWN MAYOR

25th September 2019

Town Clerk's Annual Review

1. Introduction and reason why decision required

The cycle of the Town Clerk's annual reviews was disrupted by the election earlier this year and if they are to resume, suitable arrangements need to be agreed by members.

2. Background information, options, impact assessment and risks

- 2.1 Annual reviews are not required by law, nor are they formally required as a "proper practice". However, given the importance of the role of Town Clerk to the functions of a Council of this size it would be unusual not to have some form of annual review.
- 2.2 Annual reviews take many different forms, with employers adopting formats that suit their individual circumstances and needs. Generally speaking, the larger the employer, the more structured and formal its review system tends to be. If an employer operates a "performance related pay" system, annual reviews are often used as the primary instrument for appraising performance and determining pay entitlements.
- 2.3 Ringwood Town Council is a relatively small employer. Pay is not currently linked formally to performance. So, recent annual reviews have tended toward the more informal end of the spectrum. They have been used as a relaxed forum to exchange views and any concerns in the hope of nipping problems in the bud and heading off trouble. Although some priorities have been suggested, councillors have generally shied away from setting specific goals and targets, for two very good reasons. First, the clerk's role is so susceptible to unpredictable changes that any goals could quickly become irrelevant. Secondly, the difficulty of establishing arrangements for deciding such goals in a suitably democratic, accountable and transparent manner.
- 2.4 This report therefore concludes with recommendations for arrangements to resume the relatively informal processes followed in the past. It is open to members to indicate a preference for more formal practices. In that event, a further report can be prepared for consideration at a later meeting.

3. Issue for decision and any recommendation

Should the Terms of Reference of the Staffing Committee be amended by the addition of the following "to undertake an annual review of the Town Clerk's performance in such manner as it sees fit and make recommendations to the Policy & Finance Committee with regard to the Town Clerk's pay"?

RECOMMENDATION: Councillors are recommended to approve the suggestion.

For further information, contact:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

County Council September 2019 Report

Councillor Michael Thierry - Ringwood Division

For further details - email: mthierry04@aol.com

Matters brought forward from July report

Only one Town Councillor referenced the July County Report

Hampshire County Council

Special Full Council - Attended

(Hampshire County Council 2050 Report)

Ringwood Carnival - Attended

Market Place TRO - Response to consultation

West Street TRO - Response to consultation

Ringwood Town Council matters highlighted by Mrs Hurd referred to County officers

Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee Meeting - Attended

Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council Meeting - Attended

Bridge repair at Hampshire Hatches

Ringo Service - Ringwood to Ringwood via Poulner 'Hail & Ride' concern

New Forest District Council

Full Council - Attended

Alleged Planning breach issue requested investigation

Council tenant case

Ringwood Town Council

Planning, Town & Environment Committee - Attended

Monthly Councillors' Surgery

Footpath issue on the A31 Poulner

Meeting with the new Chairman of Stillwater Park Residents Association

Various Stillwater Park issues referred